

LEWIS & CLARK IN MISSOURI RIVER COUNTRY 1805-1806

April 26, 1805: Spent the night at the confluence with the Yellowstone River just outside the Montana state line.

April 27, 1805: They came into what is now Montana in six canoes and two round boats called pirogues. Besides the two captains, there were three sergeants, 23 enlisted men, Clark's black slave, York, two interpreters, Drouillard and Charbonneau, Charbonneau's wife, Sacajawea and her 2-month-old son, Baptiste (nicknamed Pomp) and Seaman, Lewis's Newfoundland dog. The campsite that first night was one mile down from the community of Nohly and the site of Snowden Bridge.

April 28: "the beaver have cut great quantities of timber; saw a tree nearly 3 feet in diameter that had been felled by them." Camped across from Otis Creek.

April 29: Lewis saw, shot and killed his first grizzly. "this animal appeared to me to differ from the black bear; it is a much more furious and formidable animal, and will frequently pursue the hunter when wounded." Camped just above Big Muddy Creek.

April 30: Clark, Charbonneau and Sacajawea walked along the shore most of the day. Lewis shot a bull elk, which measured 5 feet 3 inches from hoof to top of the shoulder. Camped near Brockton.

May 1: "the wind being favorable we used our sails which carried us on a good pace until the wind became so high that the small canoes were unable to proceed." Spent the night in the vicinity of Elkhorn Point.

May 2: A violent wind blew all night, "at daylight it was attended with snow... being about one inch deep... found some red cloth at an old Indian camp, which we supposed had been offered and left as a sacrifice; the Indians having some knowledge of a supreme being and this their mode of worship." Camp was near the crossing of Hwys 2 and 251.

May 3: Clark explored what he called "Porcupine River (Poplar River)...from the great number of those animals found about it's mouth." A scant ¼ mile later, the Corps named a stream "2000 mile creek" (Redwater River), because that is how far they figured they had come from St. Louis. They camped near Poplar.

May 4: "saw immense quantities of buffaloe in every direction, also some Elk deer and goats; having an abundance of meat on hand I passed them without firing...passed several old Indian hunting camps." Camped between Poplar and Wolf Point.

May 5: "as usual saw a great quantity of game today... feeding in every direction; we kill whatever we wish...The country is as yesterday beautiful in the extreme." Camped near Wolf Point.

May 6: "a fine morning...passed two Creeks and a River today...the country on both sides butifull." Camped outside of Oswego.

May 7: "one of the small canoes by the bad management of the steersman filled with water and had very nearly sunk...the country we passed today...is one of the most beautiful plains we have yet seen, it rises gradually...then becoming level as a bowling green...as far as the eye can reach" Camped near Frazer.

May 8: Came upon a large river entering from the North. "the water of this river possesses a peculiar whiteness, being about the colour of a cup of tea with the admixture of a tablespoonfull of milk. from the colour of it's water we called it Milk river... called by the Minitares the river which scoalds at all others." Camped below Fort Peck Dam.

May 9: "today we passed the bed of the most extraordinary river that I ever beheld. It is as wide as the Missouri...and not containing a single drop of runing water...This stream (if such it can properly be termed) we called Big dry river." Camped near Duck Creek.

May 10: "the wind continued violent all day, the clouds were thick and black." After only 4 miles, they sought shelter. A dog wandered into camp causing them to be on the look out for Indians, but they saw none.

May 11: Woke to frost. One of the men was chased a half mile by a grizzly he had shot in the lungs. "these bear being so hard to die reather intimatedes us all; I must confess that I do not like the gentlemen and had reather fight two Indians than one bear." The bear's oil when rendered was about eight gallons. Camped near "The Pines."

May 12: Lewis describes choke-cherries in "blume" and strong winds.

May 13: "courant reather stronger than usual and the water continues to become reather clearer, from both which I anticipate a change of country shortly...Elk skins I now begin to reserve for making the leather boat at the falls." Camped above the former entrance of Crooked Creek.

May 14: "The white pirogue almost tipped over, spilling its contents, most of which Sacajawea saved. This accident had like to have cost us deerly; for in this perogue were our papers, Instruments, books, medicine...and in short almost every article indispensibly necessary to...insure the success of the enterprise...We thought it a proper occasion to console ourselves and cheer the sperits of our men and accordingly took a drink of grog and gave each man a gill of sperits." Camped above Snow Creek.

May 15: Spent the day trying to dry everything out.

May 16: Repacking the pirogue, they found that because "the Indian woman to whom I ascribe equal fortitude and resolution, with any person...caught and preserved most of the light articles which were washed overboard...the loss we sustained was not so great as we had at first apprehended."

May 17: Making good time, they passed Seven Blackfeet Creek, saw a recently deserted Indian camp, and Clark nearly stepped on a rattlesnake.

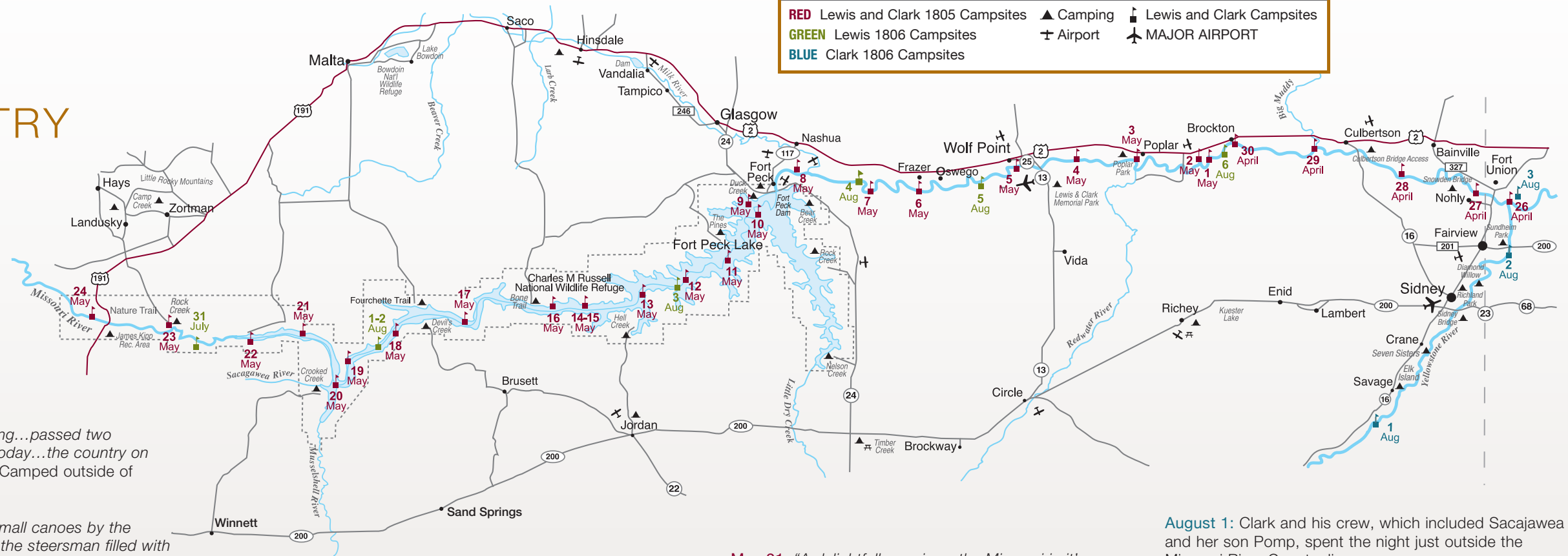
May 18: "we were enabled to employ our toe line the greater part of the day and therefore proceeded on tolerably well." Camped two miles up-stream from Devil's Creek.

May 19: "a heavy fogg, which obscured the river in such a manner that we could not see our way," caused a delayed start. Lewis's dog was badly bitten by a beaver, and from a hill, Clark saw the Musselshell River and the Little Rockies. They camped at a site, which is now under the waters of Fort Peck Lake.

May 20: Camping at the entrance of the Musselshell River, they found "a handsome bold river that about five miles above the mouth...this stream we called...bird woman's River, after our interpreter (Sacajawea)."

LEGEND

RED Lewis and Clark 1805 Campsites ▲ Camping 🏠 Lewis and Clark Campsites
GREEN Lewis 1806 Campsites ✈️ Airport ✈️ MAJOR AIRPORT
BLUE Clark 1806 Campsites



May 21: "A delightful morning...the Missouri in it's course downward makes a suddon and extensive bend (today's UL Bend) to receive the Muscle shell river."

May 22: "the river continues about the same width... fewer sandbars and the courant more gentle and regular...game not so abundant as below the Muscle Shell." Camped just below Kannuck Creek.

May 23: "frost was severe last night...water also freized on the oars...There is a large assemblage of the Burrowing Squirrel (prairie dog)...The wild rose which is now in blume are very abundant." Camped before the mouth of Rock Creek.

May 24: With as Clark mentioned, "This Breeze afforded us good Sailing, the river rising fast. Current very rapid," one can only imagine them ducking their heads as they sped under the then non-existent Fred Robinson Bridge, out of Missouri River Country and on to the west coast.

On July 3, 1806 at their camp on Lolo Creek in western Montana, the Corps of Discovery separated. **Clark's division retraced their tracks back to the three forks of the Missouri where they then explored the Yellowstone River. Lewis and his men headed north on horses to follow the Marias River down to the Missouri where they collected their buried caches. Now in canoes, and upon reaching Missouri River Country, Lewis and his crew traveled in a week what had taken them more than a month to cover the year before.**

July 31: Lewis, arriving at the C. M. Russell National Wildlife Refuge, near the mouth of Rock Creek, "took shelter in some Indian lodges built of sticks...These lodges with the addition of some Elk skins afforded us a good shelter from the rain which continued to fall powerfully all night."

August 1 and 2: Rain, rain, rain. Once again they took refuge in abandoned Indian lodges and stayed two days to dry out.

August 1: Clark and his crew, which included Sacajawea and her son Pomp, spent the night just outside the Missouri River Country line.

August 2: Upon entering Missouri River Country, "Saw eminence numbers of Elk Buffalow and wolves to day... this morning a Bear of the large vicious Species... plunged into the water and Swam towards us...we were very near being detained by the Buffalow today which were Crossing the river." After passing the future town of Sidney, they paddled out of Montana for good about three miles south of Fairview.

August 3: Trying to escape the unmerciful torment of mosquitoes, Clark's group stayed at their campsite of April, 26, 1805 at the confluence of the Yellowstone and Missouri Rivers.

August 3: Lewis, in a hurry to meet Clark, didn't even let his men stop for lunch.

August 4: Passed the mouths of the Big Dry (which had water this time) and the Milk River.

August 5: Pushing hard, the Corps traveled late into the night.

August 6: A violent storm hampered their progress and they camped 10 miles past Poplar.

August 7: "at 8 a.m. we passed the entrance of Marthy's river (Big Muddy Creek) which has changed it's entrance since we passed it last year." At the mouth of the Yellowstone they found Clark's note of August 4, saying: "Musquetors excessively troublesome...the men complained that they could not work...And I find it entirely impossible to hunt in the bottoms...The torments of those Missquetors...induce me to deturmine to proceed on to a more eliagliable Spot."

Both captains (Clark on the 2nd and Lewis on the 7th) left Montana bothered by mosquitoes and worried about each other. On Aug 12, Lewis wrote "at 1 p.m. I overtook Capt. Clark and party and had the pleasure of finding them all well."